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ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Letter dated 10 February 1994 from the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to the Secretary-General

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization, at its twenty-seventh session and on the recommendation of the Assembly of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, at its seventeenth session, adopted resolution 2.5, entitled "Proposal to proclaim 1998 International Year of the Ocean". In that resolution (see annex), I am invited to consult you regarding the action required to declare International Year of the Ocean.

Given the lead-time needed to ensure the adequate preparation of such an international year, I should appreciate the inclusion of a relevant item on the agenda of the Economic and Social Council at the earliest date possible, in accordance with the Council and General Assembly directives concerning international years. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization would be pleased to provide any documentation necessary in due course and is ready to take steps to ensure collaboration in this initiative of interested organizations of the United Nations system.

(Signed) Federico MAYOR

Annex

RESOLUTION 2.5 ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION AT ITS TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Resolution 2.5. Proposal to proclaim 1998 International Year of the Ocean

The General Conference,

Taking into account the proposals and considerations set forth in IOC Assembly resolution XVII-17 and 141 EX/Decision 7.2.1, Part II,

Calling attention to the decisive role that the ocean plays in shaping the life of this planet,

Noting that the oceans, the seas and the coastal marine environment are very important to many sectors of society and that it is essential that they be managed in an integrated way and with the involvement of all UNESCO's major programmes,

Stressing that the majority of the world's growing population is located in coastal areas, and thus has an increasing impact on marine natural resources and the marine environment, which in turn increases the number of people, as well as property and infrastructures, exposed to the risk of natural and human-induced disasters such as oil pollution accidents, storm surges, tsunamis and harmful algal blooms,

Noting further that the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, as adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, call on Member States and international organizations to increase scientific and public awareness of all relevant issues,

Reiterating, as stated in Agenda 21, that it is necessary to strengthen research and systematic observations of ocean and coastal processes, in particular by establishing a Global Ocean Observing System, in order to provide the information and data decision-makers need for integrated management and impact prediction,

Recalling that ECOSOC resolution 1980/67 recognizes the contribution that the celebration of international years, in accordance with the guidelines annexed thereto, can make to the furtherance of international cooperation and understanding,

Emphasizing the need to create favourable conditions for international transboundary cooperation in the management and development of marine resources as well as those of the coastal area as a whole, in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,

Considering that a better understanding of the combined factors associated with the increasing population of the coastal area and of the influence of the marine environment on the global ecosystem will provide essential information for decision-making,

Convinced that a special world-wide public information effort is required in order to prepare for decision-making related to the protection and the management of the oceans, the seas and the coastal marine environment,

Invites the Director-General:

(a) To undertake, in consultation with the United Nations, the action required to declare 1998 International Year of the Ocean;

(b) To take the necessary steps to mobilize the support and collaboration in this initiative of Member States, of organizations of the United Nations system, and of other appropriate international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, and regional bodies and programmes, on the understanding that such an initiative will have no financial implications for the regular budgets of UNESCO, its IOC or any other organizations of the United Nations system.